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Happy New Year from your Forest Grove Sustainability Commission!

Every New Year people tend to greet it with resolutions and goals for the upcoming 365 days. I myself find that these resolutions don't seem to last the entire year, but rather a few months, or half the year at most. If this is the case for you, I want to propose an easy goal you can set and find success: growing plants!

Regardless of the type of living situation you have, you likely have room for at least one thriving plant. There are just a few essentials to starting off right: water, soil, sunlight, a container and the plant itself. In my apartment currently, I have three small pots in my windowsill that I water as needed. They hold garlic, peppers, and a gorgeous amaryllis flower. All of them are growing like crazy, and with a little love and attention, you could have the same.

Plants are great to have around because they bring life into our homes, they help keep our air fresh, they mesh the natural world with our lives just a little bit more, and they can provide us with food, happiness, and an end result that we are proud of. Here are some ideas to get you started with growing your own plant(s) for the upcoming year.

Garlic: Next time you buy garlic cloves, let one sit out on the counter until it begins to sprout. Once it does, then you can plant it in a pot, covered with about 3 inches of soil. Make sure it gets sunlight and water it every couple of days. Before you know it, the plant will be taking off.

Peppers: Start with the seeds, plant a few in a pot and water regularly. Make sure they have sunlight and that the soil can drain. As the plant gets bigger, you might want to put it in a bigger pot, and tie the stalk to a stick in the soil so that it doesn't break from being too heavy.

Mint: This one you can start with either seeds or a sprout you buy at the store. Mint is great for beginners because it grows like a weed and can make a room smell great. It likes the soil to be rich and moist, and this plant does not need a whole lot of light, so if your home doesn't have many windows to catch the sunlight this could be the plant for you.

Tomatoes: Start with the seeds. It is best to start them in a small shallow container and then transplant them to a bigger one once they start growing. They like the sun so make sure they have a window. Give them water, and a stake in the soil to help it climb up on and wrap around.

Flowers: There are tons of flowers you can grow indoors that will thrive. Just start them as seeds, give them sunlight and water, normally keeping the soil moist, and then watch them take off.

Make your New Year's resolution one that you will find success with before your interest begins to fade. I've given you a few ideas of plants you could have growing in your home, but there are hundreds more you could choose from. Remembering to water and take care of them is like starting a new habit, it will take some time, but as you get used to it, your plants will start growing and you may shock yourself with the joy you find in growing these amazing plants!

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